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# CITY PAGES

March 16-22, 2016  
VOLUME 36 | NUMBER 1841



## 9 FEATURE

### THIS WON'T BE PRETTY

Two parties with sordid histories are about to build a soccer stadium.

By Jon Kerr

## 4 NEWS

**THE SHORTLIST**  
Walmart profits go down with wages

**BLOTTER**  
East Side story

**MIKE MULLEN**  
Inept airport security

## 19 FOOD

**SUMMIT BREWING**  
30 years at the top of its game

## 23 A-LIST

**ST. PATRICK'S DAY**  
Where to watch the parade and where to drink

## 33 FILM

**CREATIVE CONTROL**  
Not all that creative

## 35 THEATER

**BASEMENT CREATURES**  
Weird, whimsical puppetry

## 37 MUSIC

**SXSW**  
Local musicians tell us why they go

## 39 CRITICS' PICKS

## 42 CLASSIFIEDS

**SAVAGE LOVE**  
**CROSSWORD**

## cover credit

COMPOSITE IMAGE  
BY CITY PAGES

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## THE SHORTLIST



MICHAEL SIMMONS

### PREDATORS

## 60

Number of brand-name prescription drugs that have doubled in price since 2014

## 20

Number of the same drugs that have quadrupled in price since 2014

### THE WAY WE LIVE

## 35%

The decline in home listings for \$250,000 or less since February 2015, putting a squeeze on affordable housing in the Twin Cities

## 21

Percentage of Minnesota's electricity that now comes from renewable sources, well above the national average of 13 percent

**“The water wasn’t going to turn off the fire, so I told her to go back inside and I would turn off the fire.”**

Plymouth 17-year-old Urias Jah, after scaling the exterior of a building to extinguish a fire in his neighbor's third-floor apartment.

### KILLING FIELDS

**SEN. RON LATZ** (DFL-St. Louis Park) and Rep. Dan Schoen (DFL-Cottage Grove) introduced a bill last week to require background checks on all gun sales in Minnesota. The law would eliminate loopholes for gun shows, internet sales, and other private transactions.

According to a Star Tribune poll, 82 percent of Minnesotans support such measures. Nationally, even 74 percent of NRA members agree.

But few expect the will of the people to move the Legislature, where the gun lobby, Republicans, and outstate Democrats prefer that we continue to kill each other rather than inconvenience hobbyists.

### RACE TO THE BOTTOM

**WALMART'S RECIPE** for world dominance has always been low prices and even lower wages. It's a formula that's made it the country's largest employer. Unfortunately, so many other companies have followed suit that the strategy may destroy its patron saint.

Wages for Walmart's principal customer base — the lower and middle class — have been stagnant for more than a decade, punishing the company's sales.

Its stock price is down 16 percent over the last year, and Walmart is now projecting zero growth for 2016. The chickens, it seems, have finally come home to roost.



# EAST SIDE STORY

Disrespect cripples a neighborhood trying to make a comeback

**G**rease and oil stain Dave Wilbur's hands black. Pessimism has already done the same to his spirit.

He's owned Wilbur's Auto Services on St. Paul's east side for more than three decades.

He once had a trash can out front of the shop to combat wanton littering. Somebody stole it. Before that, folks coming into the neighborhood would symbolically piss on the place by throwing bottles and empty cigarette packs on the concrete right next to it.

Two people have been shot outside the business, the most recent about five years ago. The victim, suffering from seven bullet wounds, stumbled across the street before dying in front of the nearby muffler shop.

This stretch of Payne Avenue was once a working-class neighborhood. The area now mostly belongs to loiterers, nefarious

transactions, flash mob rumbles, and sirens.

"What you have is people with no respect for anyone, including themselves," Wilbur says. "I did have hope the neighborhood would turn around. But I've been hoping that for 35 years now."

Incivility and insult morphed into bloodshed last week. Bruce Chang returned home from work to find a throng of young people playing dice in his driveway. The 32-year-old told them to skedaddle. The group assaulted him with sticks, rocks, and anything else they could find. One attacker plunged a stick into Chang's upper cheek, barely missing his eyeball.

The assailants only bailed when his wife emerged from the house with a gun.

Janet and Gary Worden live two doors down. The couple raised three kids in the house. Janet remembers watching them from the window as they played in the park across the street. The most cataclysmic

event on the public green space could've been when the Wordens' now-adult son had someone take his basketball as a pre-pubescent.

Nowadays, the Wordens' front yard is guarded by a fence. What were owner-occupied, single family homes have yielded to nomadic renters and absentee landlords. Bricks and concrete of the Arlington Hills Community Center have replaced where the Worden kids played.

After bottoming out some years back, her neighborhood, Janet wants to believe, is on the comeback. Affordable housing has lured some young families to set up life here. The nearby Payne Avenue business district has witnessed hip eateries open. Tests of faith keep coming, though.

"I'm not afraid whether the bad guys are winning," says Janet. "I'm afraid that incidents [like Bruce Chang's] will make people afraid about moving into this area."



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"People need to know that, yes, there are things here still to overcome, but there's far more good people here than there are bad. That's what most important. That's why I believe the best days can still be ahead." —CORY ZUROWSKI

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# Suspected Terrorist

The story of Waqar Ahmad exposes the ineptitude of airport security

We're supposed to be feeling bad for spring breakers. This week, they were made to endure long lines to clear security at the understaffed Minneapolis-St. Paul airport.

As we consider the suffering of that unfortunate class, who will spend the coming days awash in slushy drinks and bodily fluids on the beaches of Mexico and Florida, let us also spare a thought for Waqar Ahmad.

Ahmad, a 46-year-old from Minneapolis, was set to fly to Arizona a few weeks ago. That's when he noticed his boarding pass had been marked "SSSS."

As a quality control expert for a Fortune 500 company, Ahmad flies a lot for work, but he'd never seen this abbreviation. At the airport, he would learn that it stood for "Secondary Security Screening Selection." The brown-skinned man of Pakistani descent had been "randomly selected" for the honor.

When he got to security, Ahmad's line was closed and he was surrounded by TSA agents. The officers gave him a thorough pat-down, scouring his crotch, buttocks, and all points north and south.

Ahmad didn't protest. He'd been in the TSA agents' shoes before. In the early 2000s, when he lived in New York, Ahmad was an auxiliary officer for the New York Police Department. During those tense months after September 11, he voluntarily drove the streets, an extra set of eyes and ears for the cops.

As wary passengers streamed by, TSA staff reached into Ahmad's bag and pulled out his socks, underwear, and an American flag.

Ahmad, an amateur photographer, carries the flag with him as a patriotic prop to stage photos of street scenes and landscapes. He took in the faces of the TSA agents as they unfurled the flag from a suspected terrorist's bag. "I wish I had my camera," he thought.

After about 45 minutes, he was allowed to proceed.

## TSA staff reached into Ahmad's bag and pulled out his socks, underwear, and an American flag.

The following Saturday, Ahmad headed to the Phoenix airport for his return to the Twin Cities.

This time, something was amiss. His laptop was passed through an X-ray machine and cleared. They still asked him to turn it on, proof the machine was operable. But Ahmad had left his charger in Minnesota, and the battery ran out during the trip.

The TSA personnel in Arizona were visibly concerned. Walkie-talkies were in use. Agents stepped away to call supervisors. They eventually determined Ahmad couldn't board his flight. He was forced to leave the airport.

Ahmad was confused. He had been judged a threat to the American people, but was now simply being set free. Please enjoy your stay in Phoenix.

He trudged off to rent a car from the same place he'd just returned one. Ahmad spent the night in the parking lot of a Phoenix Walmart.

"I've never been happier to see a Walmart opening at six o'clock in the morning," he says.

He bought a charger and headed back to the airport. This time, his laptop was determined not to be a bomb. Ahmad returned to Minnesota with a new back-up charger, an unexpectedly lighter wallet, and a story.

The person who seems most upset about the incident is his friend Scott Dibble, the Democratic state senator from Minneapolis. Dibble is outraged that his "super-normal" friend, a training partner for long-distance races, was profiled for having the wrong skin and name.

"[Ahmad] is a very smart, very thoughtful, quiet personality," Dibble says. "He's a sweet and gentle person."

The guy they wouldn't let pass through the Phoenix airport has been living in this country for almost three decades. In New York, he worked for Scholastic, publisher of the *Harry Potter* books. During his off hours, he wore the NYPD badge and looked for bad guys. He goes for jogs around Lake Calhoun with a gay state senator who authored the state's same-sex marriage law.

Either Waqar Ahmad is the sleepiest sleeper cell in the history of terrorism, or someone made a mistake.

While TSA is busy stopping innocents, what's frustrating is how often it fails its



Mike Mullen

own internal safety tests, says Dibble. Last year, a Department of Homeland Security team was able to get "banned" items through screenings 67 times out of 70 attempts.

A spokesman for TSA admits the agency maintains a list, but the names of risky travelers are determined by the FBI, which transmits that information to its airport enforcers.

Ahmad understands. His job involves solving problems in complex and bureaucratic systems, where multiple teams work from different locations. Everyone's working hard, he says, trying to produce results that justify their budgets, their jobs. Mistakes are inevitable.

So the more important question becomes: How long does it take to fix a mistake?

He'll find out. Last week, Ahmad booked a ticket to Seattle. He will remember to bring a laptop charger this time, and says he's "super-curious" to see if he's still on the list.

TSA agents should greet him with a smile and point him to the nearest open line. He's only a threat to America if we're afraid of beautiful landscape photos featuring our flag. Or embarrassment. **CF**

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Good Friday	12 pm 1-3 pm 7:30 pm	Good Friday Liturgy Stations of the Cross Music for Good Friday: <i>The Crucifixion</i> —John Stainer
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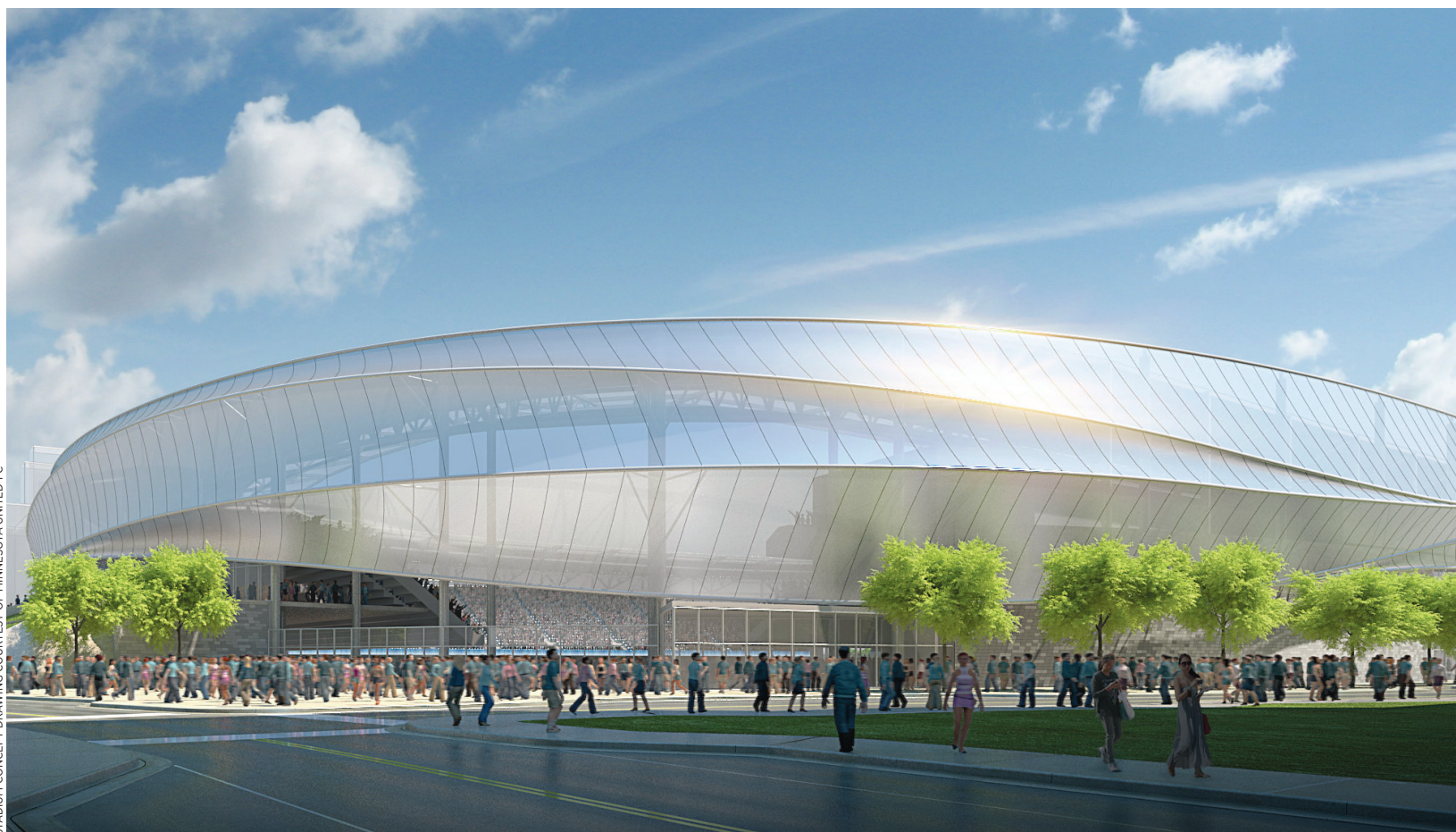
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# TWO PARTIES WITH SORDID HISTORIES ARE ABOUT TO BUILD A SOCCER STADIUM.

This won't be pretty. *By Jon Kerr*

**S**t. Paul was perhaps the most dishonest place in America in 1932, a period captured by Steve Thayer's classic novel *Saint Mudd*.

Under the "O'Connor System," named for police Chief John J. O'Connor, gangsters like John Dillinger and Ma Barker were given safe haven in return for not openly flouting local laws and sensibilities. It worked for a while.

The Saint Paul Port Authority was born that same year in a glow of civic pride. The goal was to refurbish Mississippi River terminals and restore the city's import as the headwaters of commercial navigation.

Over the years, its purview would grow to developing industrial sites and turning neglected and polluted areas into job-producing engines. Backers sold tales of progress.

But it remained a largely hidden force. Using special powers granted by the Minnesota Legislature, the Port Authority worked under the radar, handling projects St. Paul's leaders and business titans preferred to shield from scrutiny.

The public and media cared little, as long as it produced.

"We basically keep the Port Authority around to do the dirty things we don't want the public to think about," says former Councilman Tom Dimond.

Savvy mayors always knew where to turn to quietly tackle sticky affairs. So it's no coincidence that Mayor Chris Coleman chose the Port Authority to play a key role in building a new professional soccer stadium.

Leading the charge for the Minnesota United is Bill McGuire, a former United-Healthcare CEO who agreed to a record

\$468 million settlement to avoid federal prosecution in an illegal stock options caper.

Protecting St. Paul will be the Port Authority. But given its legacy of suspicious deals, this might be a good time for residents to study history and hide their wallets.

**THE PORT'S GOLDEN** years ran from 1960-1980. The agency rolled over poor riverfront neighborhoods like the West Side Flats to create industrial parks and other development. It was hailed for its success in creating jobs.

But with success came quiet pressure from city leaders to enter risky deals that conventional bankers were loath to touch. High profile projects such as hotels and shopping centers like Galtier Plaza and

Bandana Square sprang up under Mayor George Latimer.

They were financed by something called the 876 Fund. This mega-bond fund created by the Port attracted investors by using safer Port properties, such as Mississippi riverfront warehouses, as collateral.

By the late '80s, the fund was in trouble. Real estate and retail lemons were withering across the city. Port-funded projects were going belly up.

"It wasn't a very pleasant time, with a lot of projects being foreclosed," recalls Perry Feders, the Port's chief financial officer through most of the 1980s. "I think what happened was that people... saw it as a good way to develop things other people weren't interested in."

In 1991, the Port chose to dissolve the fund, citing \$51.5 million in losses. Investors stood to lose most of their money. At



the same time, Feders would later testify, the Port began to quietly alter leases to shelter property that was supposed to serve as collateral.

Some 2,700 investors sued in a case that would drag on for years.

Soon, the Port created a new subsidiary, Capital City Properties, which was used to hide millions of dollars in assets that should have been used to repay investors, alleges whistleblower Patrick Dean.

"There used to be jokes about hiding the pea under the shells," says Dean, a Port vice president from 1993 to 2006. "But I didn't realize how bad it would get."

Dean's breaking point wouldn't come till years later when the St. Paul Radisson Hotel and other properties were sold for approximately \$10 million. The proceeds were diverted to Capital City Properties rather than used to repay investors.

"I said, 'Holy shit! They're going to steal this money!' As a CPA, I couldn't stay quiet."

Dean went to his supervisors and the Port Authority Board. It didn't go well. A termination letter dated July 11, 2006 noted his "active refusal to abide by financial decisions and actions of the Port Authority," and "unsatisfactory job performance since March of 2006."

It further noted that Dean refused a

severance package, which would have required his silence. After 19 years at the agency, he was fired, losing his pension and retirement health benefits.

But he was not one to go quietly into the night. Dean says he took his story to high-

"I SAID, 'HOLY SHIT, THEY'RE GOING TO STEAL THIS MONEY!' AS A CPA, I COULDN'T STAY QUIET."

ranking state officials, both Republican and Democrat. The Minnesota Auditor's Office declined to investigate while the matter was in court.

Yet investors' lawyers were happy to listen. The case would eventually go to the Minnesota Supreme Court, which essentially found that the Port Authority's actions had violated basic investor rights.

"If you can do that, you no longer have contracts," says investors' attorney Keith Broady. "Who's going to buy the next bond

from the Port Authority?"

It had taken 20 years, but the handwriting was on the wall. In 2011, a settlement was reached. The Port agreed to pay investors \$45 million in installments until 2032, though it would admit no wrongdoing. The deal would keep the agency starved for cash over the next two decades.

Port President Louis Jambois, who retired last month, inherited these problems when he arrived in 2008. He repeats the official line that nothing "untoward" happened and called the settlement a "mutual agreement that I'm very pleased we're able to put together."

Dean scoffs at that argument.

"I know they paid out at least \$30 million more than they expected to," he says, a figure confirmed by Broady. "They've been scrambling ever since to keep their big staff employed and pay the overhead costs."

"But maybe they did win," he adds upon reflection. "...A lot of people go to jail for the type of things they did."

**QUESTIONS DIDN'T GO AWAY** as the Port's Capital City subsidiary continued to stretch its tentacles into new projects with little or no public scrutiny.

Capital City's board meets irregularly

and often for less than five minutes. Meeting minutes tend to but briefly describe transfers of public funds between the two organizations and private business partners. The corporation claims exemption from federal and state tax returns.

Yet its nonprofit status was revoked in 2011 after Capital City failed to file returns for the three previous years. Jambois expressed surprise when told of the IRS' action, which apparently also escaped the scrutiny of the Minnesota State Auditor and Attorney General.

Over the years, Capital City has continued to describe itself as a nonprofit in the media, as well as in applications for federal funding. One application netted brokerage rights to \$49 million in tax breaks, to be used to attract investors to low-income communities. The windfall allowed the Port to collect at least \$1.7 million in administrative fees.

That lifeline may now be gone. In 2014, the feds rejected an application for another \$50 million in tax credits, though the Treasury Department won't explain its refusal.

The Port now argues the IRS simply made an easily corrected mistake in yanking Capital City's nonprofit status, and that the agency is not required to notify others of the ruling.

IRS Spokeswoman Karen Connally

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wouldn't confirm whether a review is underway. But she pointed to the agency's website, which continues to show Capital's nonprofit status as revoked.

Either way, Jambois is proud of his agency's ability to bring more public funding to St. Paul projects, describing it as a "win-win." In the meantime, the Port appears to be angling with the Legislature for greater powers of secrecy.

A bill authored by Rep. Tim Mahoney, a DFLer from the East Side, would remove the City Council's potential oversight of Port staff and bonding decisions. Mahoney says he's merely trying to make the Port more efficient and clarify its independence as it seeks outside funding and contracts.

"Basically it's just getting rid of an extra step of taking it back to the City Council." The bill would also insulate the city from legal action against the Port, Mahoney says.

Yet the Port's \$45 million settlement suggests the need for greater public inspection.

"It all comes from public taxpayers of one sort or another and is being implemented generally by people who aren't elected," Dimond, the former council member, says. "Sometimes it can be a crazy deal for the city and it still suits the Port Authority."

**IN 2014**, it was matter-of-factly announced that the Port was turning over the \$3 million Midway Stadium site to Capital City for a mere \$1. The plan was to partner with the Pohlad family's United Properties in building and hopefully sharing the profits of an office-warehouse operation.

Stunningly, there was no effort put the land up for sale to the highest bidder, even after another \$2 million in public money was put into environmental cleanup and improvements. There were no public



E. KATIE HOLM

requests for proposals or interviews with other potential partners.

The media did little to question the deal, save for the Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal. It wrote about United competitors who considered Midway a hot property, but were frustrated by not being allowed to offer their own proposals.

"It's a great site," said John Allen, owner of Industrial Equities, which develops offices and warehouses. "We would have had interest in it and liked to be considered, no doubt about that."

He praised Port staff, but questioned the decision to forgo open bidding.

"Competition is always a good thing.... There was a level of disappointment that we didn't have an opportunity to bid on the project."

Jambois claimed the deal was perfectly legal, since the Legislature has granted the Port exemptions from state open bidding

laws. Unmentioned is the considerable downside: Should the project run short of cash, the Port will have to pony up even more public money, or risk diminishing its stake in the project.

"It is unusual," Jambois concedes. "It's very unusual. But it's worked very well for us over the years."

The Port has four other joint-venture deals like this. Developments such as Westminster Junction and River Bend business parks both turned polluted and under-used riverfront land into small businesses and light manufacturing centers, providing hundreds of jobs.

But critics suggest that no-bid deals tend to benefit well-connected developers, and have a way of sucking up public funds well into the future.

Riverbend, for example, was built using tax increment financing (TIF) loans, which are repaid from developers' regular tax

"A lot of people go to jail for the type of things they did," says Patrick Dean.

payments for city, school, and other governmental services. It's now far behind on its payments. Though Westminster has done somewhat better, it too remains behind.

The Port Authority now has 13 projects built with such financing, which is theoretically supposed to expand the city's future tax base. But the complexity of these deals often makes it difficult for bean counters, let alone Joe Public, to track whether TIF investments are really paying off for St. Paul residents.

In a 2012 email, Port CFO Laurie Hanson expressed concerns that reported TIF proceeds from the Riverbend project did not appear to match city tax records. "We are finding unusual variances in all of the TIF districts," she wrote, though no resolution appears in any following correspondence released by the agency.

Such discrepancies are of serious concern in St. Paul, where nearly 10 percent of commercial property is in a TIF district. Throw in its large number of government and nonprofit properties, and there's a limited tax base to fund city services.

"That's one of my real concerns," says Lowertown real estate investor John Mannillo. He worries that the same mistakes keep being made behind closed doors. "We've done too many things that aren't sustainable. ...It's hard sometimes to even find out what's going on."

"The city has turned over tremendous assets for a dollar," adds Dimond, alluding to the Midway Stadium deal. "It lines their pockets at the expense of the taxpayer and private investment. You can make the case that one of the things most undermining private development in St. Paul is the Port Authority."



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**THE DIAMOND PRODUCTS** site in Lowertown had been a thorn in the city's side for years until Mayor Coleman began describing visions of a baseball stadium. An empty factory was left on a site that had housed coal dust and industrial products since the days of railroad baron James J. Hill.

Private redevelopment had been foiled, at least in part by fears of pollution and unstable soil that would make new construction difficult.

Nevertheless, the Port Authority bought the site for \$3 million in 2012. In what was supposed to be a simple plan, it would be swapped for Midway Stadium and serve as the new home for the St. Paul Saints.

But behind-the-scenes scrambling began almost immediately. The city was hoping to attract matching funds from the state. Gov. Mark Dayton was known to look favorably on the ballpark, but St. Paul leaders feared a pricetag higher than \$54 million might kill their chances.

The city knew it couldn't make that work. While St. Paul officials were publicly promising to build the stadium for \$54 million or less, they were privately doing spreadsheets showing realistic costs up to \$65 million.

"The current working assumption is that we have to get the entire project done for \$54 million," warned Planning & Economic Development staffer Martin Schieckel in 2012. "As you can see we are well above that number, even without the land cost."

Still, the city applied for state funds using the figure it couldn't achieve. A September 20, 2012 email from Parks & Rec Director Mike Hahm and chief planner Jodi Martinez, sent to Mayor Coleman and then Deputy Mayor Paul Williams, now a Port Authority Board member, noted that "the project cost estimate remains at approximately \$60M."

Something had to give.

With construction well underway in 2013, the city decided to break the news: The ballpark needed an extra \$8.8 million.

Former Councilman Tom Dimond says the Port is used "to do the dirty things we don't want the public to think about."

Officials claimed to have recently discovered "bad soils," which greatly elevated the costs.

The supposed revelation should have been an embarrassment to the Port Authority. It was responsible for studying the site before the land was purchased. At the same time, it was also sheepishly explaining the discovery of unexpected "bad soil" issues at the Midway Stadium site, driving up the costs there as well.

Yet instead of being castigated for incompetence, the Port was greeted as a savior in City Hall emails. Its expertise was raising money for environmental cleanup, and the sudden discovery of cost overruns provided a need for that skill.

"We have a long history of maximizing asks," Jambois jovially noted in an email exchange with the mayor's office. Ramsey County and the Metropolitan Council were soon kicking in extra money.

It wouldn't be enough. The city made further cuts to its Parks Department, which was already closing rec centers and programs in mostly poor neighborhoods. It also borrowed money.

Nonetheless, Coleman now regularly describes the stadium as an unqualified success, a model of civic progress and economic development.

**ST. PAUL'S DOWNTOWN** Macy's closed in 2013. It left a black hole at a highly visible location.

The original line out of City Hall had been one of optimism and faith in the private market to rejuvenate the site.

"What I can tell you is there's been larger than average interest in the property," Coleman spokesman Joe Campbell told the Pioneer Press. "With the amount of public investment that exists around it — includ-





E. KATIE HOLM

ing the light-rail line — it's a property that will be attractive to developers."

But a deal between Macy's and a San Francisco developer fell through mysteriously. Emails suggest that ill feelings between the mayor's office and Macy's soon followed, complicating efforts to sell the building privately.

Enter the Port Authority.

Staff emails suggest the project wasn't enthusiastically welcomed. With a plethora of physical problems inside an aging, fortress-like shell, Port staff began comparing it to a brownfield. Demolition was estimated at \$16 million.

Jambois suggests there were fears someone would buy the structure and convert it into a parking ramp or cold storage in the middle of downtown. So the agency intervened at Coleman's request.

The \$3 million pricetag was only the beginning. Within months, the building had bled the Port another \$1 million for everything from safety upgrades to architectural redesign fees, with only revenues from a small parking ramp to offset them.

A sense of black humor soon appeared in Port emails. "The albatross may be leaving the nest," wrote lead staffer Monte Hilleman in one hopeful reference to a deal last spring. It too fell through.

With optimism running low, the Port fell back on a familiar approach.

Last September, the site was deeded over to Capital City for \$1. Capital then created a partnership with Oppidan Investment. If the deal is concluded, plans call for a Walgreens and a practice rink for the Minnesota Wild that would ideally spur other tenants to fill up the rest of the building.

To sweeten the pot, the city threw another \$11 million in tax benefits at the deal. Coleman termed it "terrific news and further evidence of momentum downtown."

But St. Paul's investment was now \$15 million. And it will only have a 10 percent share of future profits from the partnership to recoup that money.

"The albatross may be leaving the nest," a Port staffer wrote of the empty Macy's building.

**THE MIDWAY SOCCER** stadium presents the prospect of déjà vu all over again, as Yogi Berra would say.

Coleman and McGuire are in the midst of a PR blitz to promote a \$120 million, 21,500-seat facility generously paid for by Minnesota United. Swooning media accounts describe design images of flowing water and twinkling stars.

The proposal originally promised to bring major league soccer to St. Paul without direct cost to taxpayers, other than turning over an unused former bus garage as a site.

That promise has quickly fallen by the wayside.

The City Council rushed to approve \$18.4 million for infrastructure and environmental cleanup — without waiting for final recommendations from a ballyhooed citizens' advisory process or even concluding basic research.

The vote came before St. Paul conducted an environmental impact study of the site. Also missing is a transportation study showing how the already congested Snelling-University intersection will handle huge surges in traffic.

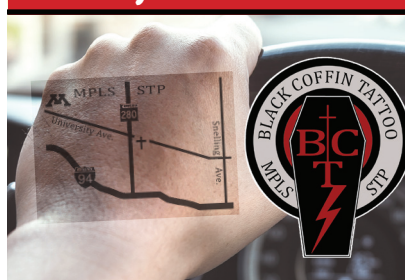
With no new parking garages planned, Coleman suggests that half the fans will use the Green Line, while the remaining 10,000 will apparently scramble for parking in the surrounding neighborhoods.

The council refused to even delay the vote by a week to allow an independent analysis of the deal. This despite the fact that it was going into business with McGuire, a man whose 2007 stock dealings were so egregious he was banned from running a public company for 10 years.

It only gets worse from there.

The deal gives McGuire naming rights to the stadium and control of plazas and public

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areas, issues that have already proved controversial with the new Vikings stadium.

Another red flag is contract language suggesting the city is committed to millions of dollars more for roads, parking lots, and other infrastructure in the surrounding areas.

Though only rough plans have been released, council supporters talk of a “world class” redevelopment for the area,

## SWOONING MEDIA ACCOUNTS DESCRIBE DESIGN IMAGES OF FLOWING WATER AND TWINKLING STARS.

including parks, bikeways, restaurants, a movie theater, housing, and commercial development.

Exactly how and when that will happen is unknown. City officials admit they have no actual commitments from private investors — although McGuire and United Properties have made their interest known.

Council President Russ Stark confesses it’s “a bit of a gamble” to assume the stadium will stimulate long-awaited redevelopment in the area. History shows that using stadiums to kickstart development has been a resounding failure most everywhere it’s been tried.

Seemingly forgotten is that, just a few years ago, city officials were getting plenty of redevelopment interest in the Snelling and I-94 corner from big-box developers like Home Depot and Best Buy. Now the deal with McGuire requires that the stadium site be permanently tax-free.

St. Paul’s legislative delegation is being urged to push through the property and construction sales tax exemptions for the stadium no matter what the political cost. To achieve it, some Capitol insiders fear funding could be endangered for projects like the Kellogg Avenue Bridge reconstruction, Como Zoo additions, or state property tax relief for homeowners.

In a familiar pattern, the Port has been picked to handle the estimated \$6 million environmental cleanup for the site. Along with the city and Met Council, the Port initially tried to keep secret its negotiations to buy the MTA bus barn site, a violation of state public records laws. Only public exposure and embarrassment ended that maneuver.

The Port is expected to play a major role in the deal, especially in developing land around the stadium. The affable Jambois agrees the agency’s ways can seem complicated, but he rejects the notion that it’s

operating in secrecy.

“Our board meetings are open, our minutes are public, we have a website,” he said. “The average Joe has no trouble figuring out what we do if they ask us.”

**BUT EVEN BOARD** members struggle to explain the agency’s activities. City Councilman and Port Authority Board member Dai Thao had trouble answering questions about Capital City, joint venture programs, and other operations. “I’m very new,” he said of his 10-month tenure, referring questions to Port staff.

Meanwhile, board member and City Councilman Dan Bostrom suggests some secrecy is required in attracting businesses under sensitive and competitive conditions. The Port, he says, has done wonders with projects on the East Side. But he acknowledges that secrecy hasn’t helped deal with problems like the bankrupt bond fund.

“It’s been a nightmare to get out from underneath.”

Asked whether that history might be repeated, he responded cryptically. “We hope not. But sometimes you can’t control everything. You have to look at where the pressure comes from for us to do things.”


Finding answers to those questions isn’t getting easier in St. Paul. Late last year, City Hall announced new six-month time limits on keeping emails and other documents available for public viewing. It essentially rules out access to many of the documents cited in this story.

“The public is generally not aware of any of these things and the media really doesn’t cover it,” says Dimond. “We need more daylight.”

But that daylight won’t be coming from the mayor’s office. When questioned about the Port’s role within the city, spokesperson Tonya Tennessen responded with a short statement:

“St. Paul’s partnership with the Port Authority is critical to the continued momentum and vitality of our city. One need only to look at cities like Memphis — with mile after mile of burned out industrial areas — to recognize how invaluable an effective Port Authority is.”

The Port Authority will hopefully celebrate victories benefitting the whole of St. Paul this year. Included may well be the opening of the former Midway Stadium development. If so, there will likely be toasts to United Properties’ 100th year of operation since being formed as the real estate wing of Hamm Brewing.

A few may also remember it was in 1933, just after the Port Authority was formed, that family patriarch William Hamm was kidnapped off the streets of St. Paul in broad daylight by Creepy Karvis’ gang. They got away with it for a while. But the public outcry eventually brought down the O’Connor System of organized crime in the city. 

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# STILL ON TOP

Summit Brewing celebrates 30 years of deviancy



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BY JERARD FAGERBERG

In 2016, opening a brewery in the Midwest and leading with a pale ale is about the least rebellious thing you can do. In 1986, when Summit Brewing opened its doors, it was outright heresy.

Summit was the first microbrewery launched in Minnesota since Prohibition. The upstart brought its flagship Extra Pale Ale to a market that was flush with factory-brewed light beers and absolutely devoid of small craft operations. They were thrust immediately into an impossible situation — sell complex, atypical beer and do it while competing with Miller, Coors, and Bud.

Founder Mark Stutrud couldn't get an endorsement from the Brewers' Association of America to start his brewery. When he asked for an application, they responded with a letter discouraging the young North Dakotan. Stutrud's own father told him he was crazy. Thirty years later, Stutrud's

St. Paul brewery is the second largest in the state, and EPA has become the most ubiquitous brew in the Twin Cities.

"Our first year, we were totally self-distributed, because there wasn't a beer distributor that would touch us with a 10-foot pole," Stutrud remembers. "We were deviants."

With 110-plus brewhouses and dozens more breaking ground every year, the Gopher State is now one of the hottest beer locales in America. But the industry is just as quick to forget as it is to grow. Summit is so far removed from its initial rebellion that people assume it has plateaued.

"Today, when you open up a craft brewery in the Twin Cities, the infrastructure is already in place," says head brewer Damian McConn, whose 13 years at Summit have given him a perspective the average EPA drinker seems to have lost. "You go into a bar, and there's probably 40 or 50 different tap handles with craft beer. Thirty years ago,

that was a completely alien idea. 'Deviant' is one term, but 'complete fuckin' lunatic' is another I'd use."

In three decades, Summit's role in the Minneapolis/St. Paul brewing scene has changed dramatically. In today's bustling beer frontier, EPA hardly seems as heretical as an oaked barleywine or a 200-IBU imperial ale. But Stutrud and his team have long since learned what it takes to endure in the Wild West — consistent, dependable quality.

"I love it when people criticize us for being consistent and balanced," Stutrud says. "I'm glad that they notice. We were the ones that really had to put our shoulders to the plow. We work damn hard to make sure we have that consistency."

This consistency is more remarkable when put in the context of scale. In 30 years of operation, Summit has grown from a 4,000-barrel upstart into a 240,000-barrel leviathan complete with a training complex

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Stutrud is a graduate of the Siebel Institute of Technology, where he earned a diploma in Brewing Technology in 1991. McConn, a former brewer at Guinness, holds an honors degree in Brewing and Distilling from renowned Scottish brew school Heriot-Watt University.

Book smarts might not be as sexy as iconoclasm, but Stutrud and his seven rigorously vetted brewers have used their expertise in the marketplace to perpetuate quality as the cardinal virtue of brewing. It has been the backbone of their 600 percent growth. It's what keeps each bottle of EPA as good





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Summit head brewer Damian McConn, quality manager Rebecca Newman, and founder Mark Stutrud

JERARD FAGERBERG

as the last and the first.

"I was a home brewer, but I don't use that as any kind of a set of credentials," says Stutrud. "Look, it's a lot of fun. I don't want to be a downer if somebody wants to get into the groovy lifestyle of brewing, but there's also a huge, heavy responsibility to the consumer to deliver consistency, to be reliable, to be trustworthy."

"It starts with respect," McConn adds. "Respect for the consumer, respect for the industry, for the history and tradition. Not all people in the industry have that, but it's the key."

Stutrud sees Summit as a role model in an industry overrun with arrogance. Their commitment to quality testing is in direct opposition to brewers who rush from basement to Kickstarter to commercial brewery without making sure they're upscaling in a way that's tenable.

"Sometimes it's not all that comfortable being surrounded by amateurs," he says. "We've got people that have been in business for less than five years making substandard beers, but yet they have an attitude as if they invented beer."

Summit's biggest asset in the transformation from standard-breaker to standard-setter has been Quality Manager Rebecca Newman. Newman is an exacting, no-bullshit tactician. She has a pedigree that reads like a craft-beer Mount Rushmore — Samuel Adams, Dogfish Head, Sierra Nevada.

"What keeps me up at night is bad beer," Newman says. "It's like buying bad milk. That sheds a bad light on me."

Newman got her degree in Food and Science Technology from the University of

California-Davis the year before Summit opened. While Stutrud was building Summit from the ground up, she was helping maintain Anheuser-Busch's grip on the mainstream. She knows what it took to get Summit to where it is, and now she's using all 30-plus years of her experience to ensure that Stutrud's business continues to set an example for newcomers barging into their territory.

And then there is the territory yet to be conquered. Craft beer drinkers represent only 11 percent of the total market share, which, to Stutrud, represents an 89 percent opportunity for growth.

"There's going to be some more religious transformations in the future," he says. "There are a lot of people you're going to change, but you gotta do it out of respect for them."

He, McConn, and Newman predict that a market correction in the next decade will thin the field. Drinkers will become more knowledgeable and have a lower tolerance for poorly maintained beer. The scientists will outlast the raconteurs. And there will be EPA — consistent as it is today, though people will probably still take its deviance for granted.

"Somehow, I'm treated like I'm a part of the establishment just because we've been around for 30 years," Stutrud says with a laugh. "I have to admit, I'm really struggling with how old I'm getting, but I'll always be a nonconformist."

Summit's 30th anniversary kicked off in early March with the release of its Anniversary Double IPA and will culminate with the annual Backyard Bash this September. [@](#)

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# A LIST

**FRIDAY** *Snow Bound* celebrates winter kicking it **P. 27**

**SATURDAY** *Four Saints* is eclectically campy **P. 29**

**SUNDAY** Minneapolis Craft Market returns **P. 31**

WEDNESDAY 3/16

## ART/GALLERY

### COFFEE HOUSE PRESS IN THE PARK: STEVEN LANG

SILVERWOOD PARK

The Traveling Museum, the Rural Aesthetic Initiative's gallery on wheels, has set up camp at Silverwood Park, where writer and photographer Steven Lang became a hermit, in Henry David Thoreau fashion, for the month of February. Transforming the mobile project space into a writer's den, Lang funneled his creativity into productive output during the cruel Minnesota winter. He'll be sharing the fruits of his labor this Wednesday during a conversation about art and the environment presented by Silverwood Park and Coffeehouse Press. Through his writing and photography, Lang reflects on solitude, winter recreation, hibernation, and the notion of competition. Free. 7 p.m. 2500 Cty Rd. E, St Anthony; 763-694-7707. —SHEILA REGAN

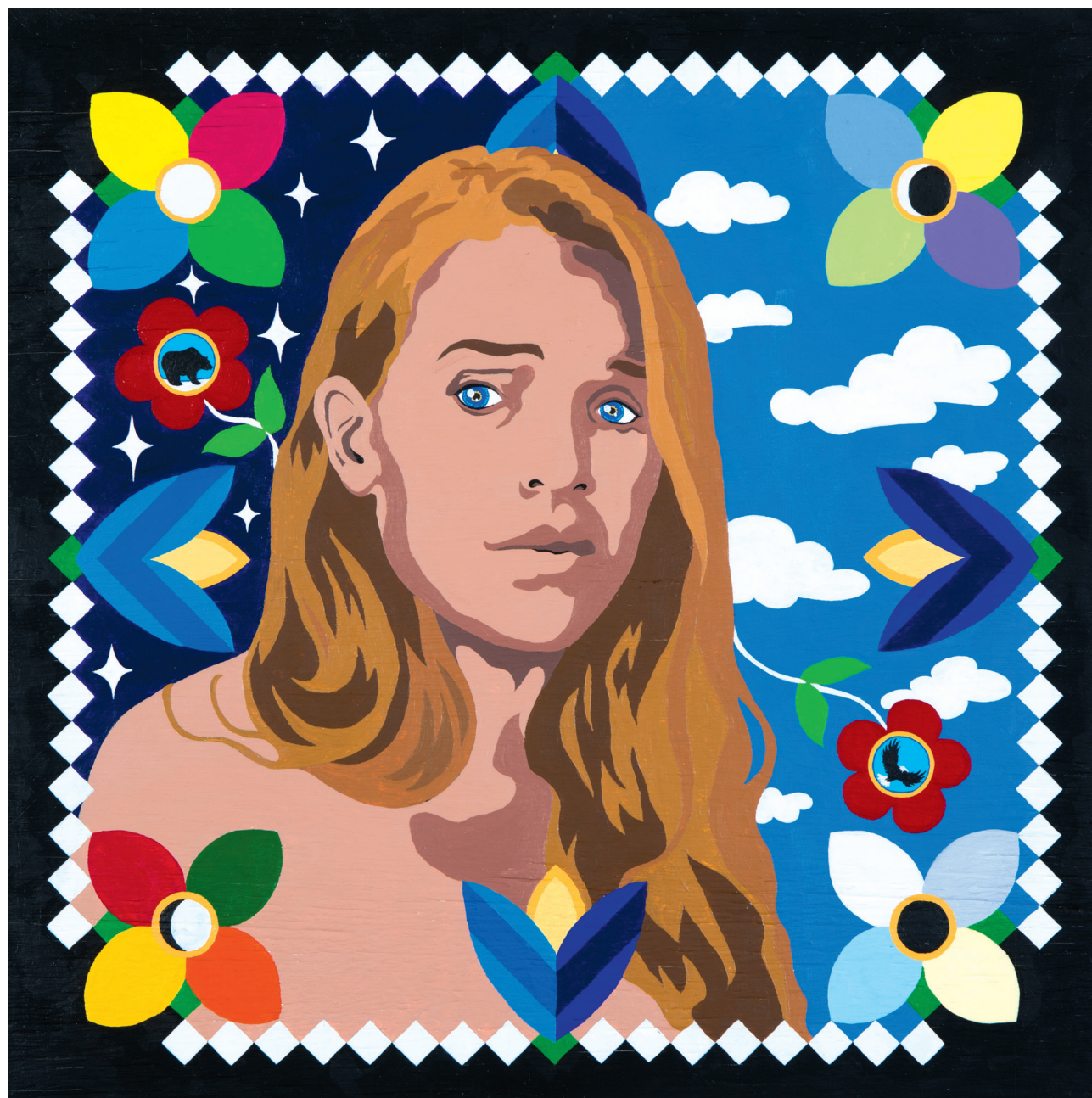
THURSDAY 3/17

## HOLIDAY

### ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADES

MINNEAPOLIS AND ST. PAUL

This Thursday, the Twin Cities will be awash in green as it celebrates St. Patrick's Day. The party starts in St. Paul, as the 50th annual parade makes its way down Fifth Street from Sibley to Rice Park at noon ([www.stpatsmn.org](http://www.stpatsmn.org)). After that, there will be lots of fun things to enjoy around town. The Landmark Center (75 W. Fifth St., St. Paul; 651-292-3293) will have plenty of family entertainment from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., including live Irish music, workshops, a children's craft area, dance performances, and games. (Admission is \$6.) There will be plenty of grownup fun to be had as well, with Patrick McGovern's Pub, Bedlam Lowertown, and the Liffey nearby. Or head over to O'Gara's, which will have an outdoor



Aza Erdrich explores Native traditions through personal narrative at *All My Relations*

AZA ERDRICH

tent, live music, plenty of beer, and the "world's shortest parade" marching on at 3:30 p.m. Meanwhile, Minneapolis keeps the holiday shenanigans rolling into the evening, with its parade beginning on Marquette Avenue at 11th Street, and ending

at Fifth Street ([www.mplsstpats.org](http://www.mplsstpats.org)). If you're thirsty, you'll have a plethora of options before and after the event, with the Local, Kieran's, O'Donovan's, Brit's, and pretty much every bar nearby pouring pints all day and night. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

## ART/PARTY

### THIRD THURSDAY

MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ART

For this installment of Third Thursday, the Minneapolis Institute of Art will be

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27 ►



## THE MAINROOM

Voted 2015 "Best of The Twin Cities" Readers' Choice for Best Rock Club, Best Dance Club, Best Concert Venue, and Best All Ages Venue

THURSDAY, MARCH 17



**DRAKE NITE 5**  
WITH  
**DJ BACH**  
**DJ GREENERY**  
**(CLOUD)**  
\$10/\$12/9PM/18+

FRIDAY, MARCH 18



89.3 THE CURRENT AND CITY PAGES PRESENT  
**THE PINES**  
ABOVE THE PRAIRIE RELEASE  
PHIL COOK  
STOLYETTE  
\$15/8PM/18+

SATURDAY, MARCH 19




**GREENSKY BLUEGRASS**  
SHOOK TWINS  
\$18/\$20/7PM/18+

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23



89.3 THE CURRENT PRESENTS  
**LUCIUS**  
PURE BATHING CULTURE  
\$20/\$22/7PM/18+

THURSDAY, MARCH 24



GO 95.3 PRESENTS  
**GO SHOW**  
HOSTED BY MR. PETER PARKER  
FEATURING  
CURREN\$Y, YOUR OLD DROOG,  
SIMS, GREG GREASE,  
SOPHIA ERIS, AND FRIENDS  
\$11.50/\$21.50/7PM/18+

FRIDAY, MARCH 25



CITY PAGES, 89.3 THE CURRENT, AND ELECTRIC FETUS PRESENT  
**SOUND + VISION: TRANSMISSION'S 15TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**  
FEATURING  
**DJ JAKE RUDH**  
PRESENTING A VERY SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO DAVID BOWIE  
\$8/\$10/9PM/18+

SATURDAY, MARCH 26



**SOUL ASYLUM**  
BRUISE VIOLET  
\$20/8PM/18+

FRIDAY, APRIL 1



**SHELLAC**  
MONO  
\$15/8PM/18+

SUNDAY, APRIL 3



**MUTEMATH**  
PAPER ROUTE  
\$25/\$27/7PM/18+

TUESDAY, APRIL 5



89.3 THE CURRENT PRESENTS  
**THE JOY FORMIDABLE**  
EVERYTHING EVERYTHING  
\$20/7PM/18+

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6



GLORIOUS DEAD PRESENTS  
3001: THE TOUR  
**FLATBUSH ZOMBIES**  
ASAP TWELVYY  
REMY BANKS  
\$20/6PM/ALL AGES

FRIDAY, APRIL 8



89.3 THE CURRENT PRESENTS  
**HAR MAR SUPERSTAR**  
SOLID GOLD  
BUG FIX  
\$20/8PM/18+

SATURDAY, APRIL 9



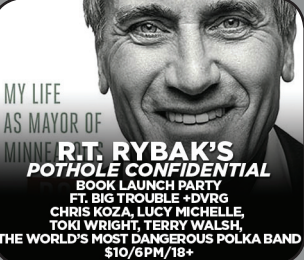
FIRST AVENUE AND SMA PRESENT  
**GALACTIC**  
BOMBINO  
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SUNDAY, APRIL 10



THE CEDAR PRESENTS  
**ANI DIFRANCO**  
CHASTITY BROWN  
\$45/7PM/18+

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13



MY LIFE AS MAYOR OF MINNEAPOLIS  
**R.T. RYBAK'S POTHOLE CONFIDENTIAL**  
BOOK LAUNCH PARTY  
FT. BIG TROUBLE + DVRG  
CHRIS KOZA, LUCY MICHELLE,  
TOKI WRIGHT, TERRY WALSH,  
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\$10/6PM/18+

THURSDAY, APRIL 14



89.3 THE CURRENT PRESENTS  
**NIGHT MOVES**  
GRAMMA'S BOYFRIEND  
CARROLL  
\$12/\$15/7PM/18+

FRIDAY, APRIL 15



89.3 THE CURRENT PRESENTS  
**THE 40NTH FLOOR**  
WHITE LIGHT RIOT (REUNION SHOW)  
ERIK KOSKINEN  
\$15/8PM/18+

SATURDAY, APRIL 16



89.3 THE CURRENT PRESENTS  
**CAROLINE SMITH**  
HARRIET BROWN  
DJ SET BY LIP LAP  
(SARAH WHITE AND ALICIA STEELE OF HIATUS)  
\$20/8PM/18+

TUESDAY, APRIL 19



89.3 THE CURRENT PRESENTS  
**ANDREW BIRD**  
DAWN OF MIDI  
\$36/7PM/18+

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20



4/20 SHOW  
**MOD SUN**  
BOBBY RAPS  
ROCKY DIAMONDS  
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\$22/6PM/ALL AGES

THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 2016



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FRIDAY, APRIL 22 & SATURDAY, APRIL 23



89.3 THE CURRENT PRESENTS  
**BOB MOULD**  
THE SUICIDE COMMANDOS  
FURY THINGS  
\$25/8PM/18+

SUNDAY, APRIL 24



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SAVAGE IMPERIAL DEATH  
MARCH TOUR FEATURING  
**NAPALM DEATH**  
**MELVINS**  
**MELT BANANA**  
\$25/7PM/18+

THURSDAY, APRIL 28 — SATURDAY, APRIL 30



THREE NIGHTS  
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\$79.50 (THREE NIGHT PASS)  
8PM/18+

WEDNESDAY, MAY 4



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5/21 BOYCE AVENUE "Be Somebody World Tour" All Ages  
5/22 OLD 97'S and HEARTLESS BASTARDS  
w/ BJ BARHAM (OF AMERICAN AQUARIUM) 18+  
5/24 YEASAYER 18+  
5/25 THE KILLS w/ L.A. WITCH 18+  
5/26 CHARLES BRADLEY AND HIS EXTRAORDINAIRES 18+  
6/03 OH WONDER 18+  
6/05 AN EVENING WITH STURGILL SIMPSON "A Sailor's Guide To Earth" Tour 18+  
6/15 CATFISH AND THE BOTTLEMEN 18+  
7/12 THE WOMBATS w/ COAST MODERN 18+  
7/27 BØRNS All Ages - SOLD OUT  
10/30 AN EVENING WITH PETER HOOK & THE LIGHT, PERFORMING "SUBSTANCE" - JOY DIVISION &

### 7TH ST ENTRY

- 3/16 HUNTER VALENTINE and SICK OF SARAH  
w/ THE MODERN ERA, REBEL QUEENS 18+  
3/17 APOLLO COBRA and HONEYSTICK 18+  
3/18 KORDA 3 SHOWCASE ft. JIM RUIZ SET, THE OCEAN BLUE,  
DEEP POOL, THE STARFOLK, DJ JAKE RUDH 18+  
3/19 MOUNT MORIAH w/ ELEPHANT MICAH 18+  
3/20 MC CHRIS w/ NATHAN ANDERSON, PHILLIP MORRIS 18+  
3/22 KICK w/ COLIN CAMPBELL & THE SHACKLETONS, THE RUMOURS, GRAMMA 18+  
3/23 THE HOUSE OF YEEZY: AN EVENING DEDICATED  
TO KANYE WEST 18+  
3/24 LA FAMILIA ft. FINDING NOVYON w/ RP HOOKS, DRELLI,  
ALIBASTER JONES, DJLOW, DJ FRANK CASTLE, AND DJ TRAVIS GORMAN 18+  
3/25 ESCONDIDO w/ JACE EVERETT 18+  
3/26 CULLEN OMORI w/ SUZIE, LIVING HOUR 18+  
3/27 ACID MOTHERS TEMPLE w/ ORPHAN GOGGLES 18+  
3/28 SOL w/ BROTHERS FROM ANOTHER, OTIENO TERRY, CHANCE YORK 18+  
3/29 OPERATORS w/ BOGAN VIA 18+  
3/30 SKATING POLLY w/ CATBATH, CHERRY COLA, BRUISE VIOLET 18+  
3/31 LEIF - RIOT BOI w/ NESS NITE, SLAMDUNKAPHER 18+  
4/01 QUILT w/ VAL SON, HALFLOVES 18+  
4/02 NAP EYES and CIAN NUGENT 18+  
4/03 RESTORATIONS w/ CREEPOID, THE DIRTY NIL 18+  
4/04 YUCK w/ BIG THIEF 18+  
4/05 SUNFLOWER BEAN w/ WEAVES, BRILLIANT BEAST 18+  
4/06 ALEX G and PORCHES w/ YOUR FRIEND 18+  
4/07 PRINCE RAMA w/ SASHA CONDA 18+  
4/08 DENZEL CURRY "2055: THE ULT EXPERIENCE TOUR"  
w/ JK THE REAPER 18+  
4/09 HÆLOS 18+  
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w/ CHRISTIAN ROSENAU 18+  
4/13 AURORA w/ TOR MILLER 18+  
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MN MEAN MOVEMENT 18+  
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w/ REVEREND BARON 18+  
4/20 BIG WILD 18+  
4/21 COMMUNION: TWIN CITIES ft. JAKUBI, WALKER LUKENS,  
CYN, AIDAN KNIGHT 18+  
4/13 GET CRYPHY 18+

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### UPCOMING SHOWS AT OTHER VENUES



**THURSDAY, MARCH 17**  
Set In Stone Tour  
**STICK FIGURE**  
w/ FORTUNATE YOUTH, RAGING FYAH  
at the TRIPLE ROCK  
\$15/7PM/18+



**SATURDAY, MARCH 19**  
89.3 The Current presents An Evening with  
**GREG DULLI**  
w/ special guest DERRICK BROWN  
at the CEDAR  
\$30/7PM/ALL AGES



**FRIDAY, MARCH 25**  
**YOUNG FATHERS**  
at the FINE LINE  
\$15/\$17/\$30 RESERVED BALCONY  
8PM/18+



**SUNDAY, MARCH 27**  
**YUNG LEAN**  
at the FINE LINE  
\$21/6PM/ALL AGES



**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30**  
89.3 The Current and City Pages present  
**THAO & THE GET DOWN**  
**STAY DOWN**  
w/ SAINTSENECA  
at the FINE LINE  
\$20/7:30PM/18+



**FRIDAY, APRIL 1**  
**CHAIRLIFT**  
at the FINE LINE  
\$15/\$30 RESERVED BALCONY/8PM/18+



**FRIDAY, APRIL 1**  
**RUN RIVER NORTH**  
w/ THE LIGHTHOUSE & THE WHALER  
at the TRIPLE ROCK  
\$12/\$15/8PM/18+



**SATURDAY, APRIL 2**  
Kaleidoscope Tour  
**A GREAT BIG WORLD**  
w/ GENEVIEVE  
at the FINE LINE  
\$20/\$35 (RESERVED BALCONY)/7PM/18+



**SUNDAY, APRIL 3**  
**DAVE SIMONETT**  
at the RED HERRING (DULUTH, MN)  
\$15/7PM/21+



**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6**  
**DMA'S**  
w/ TALL, TALL MOUNTAIN,  
CARBON HANDSHAKE  
at the TRIPLE ROCK  
\$10/8PM/18+

- 4/07 RA RA RIOT w/ AND THE KIDS, PWR BTM at the Triple Rock  
4/08 GEOGRAPHER w/ THE CROOKES at the Triple Rock  
4/10 AUTOLUX at the Triple Rock  
4/10 ATLAS GENIUS w/ SKYLAR GREY,  
SECRET WEAPONS at the Fine Line (presented by Journeys)  
4/13 TONY VISCONTI + WOODY WOODMANSEY'S  
HOLY HOLY - CELEBRATING DAVID BOWIE  
w/ JESSICA LEE MORGAN at the Fine Line  
4/15 JULIEN BAKER w/ PHOEBE BRIDGERS at the Triple Rock  
4/16 WELCOME TO NIGHT VALE w/ SPECIAL MUSICAL GUEST  
DANNY SCHMIDT & CARRIE ELKIN at the State Theatre  
4/23 THE SUBWAYS w/ PINS at the Triple Rock



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MONEY \$HOT



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WITH SPECIAL GUESTS LUCHAFER

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93X

89.3 THE CURRENT PRESENTS

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**SONNY KNIGHT** CAMERON KINGHORN OF NOOKY JONES  
JAYANTHI KYLE OF GOSPEL MACHINE  
JAMES GREAR AND COMPANY  
MOLLY MAHER • PAVIELLE

FEATURING THE SECRET STASH HOUSE BAND **THE LAKERS**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 26 • THE FITZGERALD THEATER**  
TICKETS AND INFO AT [FITZGERALDTHEATER.ORG](http://FITZGERALDTHEATER.ORG)

the current

This program is made possible in part by the Arts and Culture Heritage Fund Created by the Minnesota Legacy Amendment.

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**•VOTED BEST ROCK CLUB BY CITY PAGES IN 2015•**

3/16 **MIC SWAP: COMEDY•MUSIC•DANGER•FUN** HOSTED BY RANA MAY W/ THE SLOW DEATH 7PM  
3/17 **ST. PATRICK'S DAY WITH DILLINGER FOUR** W/ NATO COLES & THE BLUE DIAMOND BAND, BUG FIX, CHERRY COLA 7:30PM  
3/18 **DARK HORSE REVUE: A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE HARRISON** FT. JOHN ELLER, RANDY CASEY, NOAH LEVY, STEVE PRICE, ANDY DEE W/ GUEST APPEARANCES BY ADAM LEVY, DAVE BOQUIST, LESLIE BALL, AND MORE 7:30PM  
3/19 **BAG RAIDERS** W/ PLASTIC PLATES 8PM  
3/20 **JAZZ BRUNCH** W/ THE JAKE HANSON TRIO (NO COVER/ALL AGES) 10AM - 3PM  
3/20 **BIRTHDAY SUITS** W/ JUNGLES, COLOR TV, DJ COZY 8PM  
3/22 **SHEARWATER** W/ VAL SON 7:30PM  
3/23 **GEORGE HARRISON MOVIE NIGHT** FT. **GEORGE FEST: A TRIBUTE TO THE MUSIC OF GEORGE HARRISON** 7PM (NO COVER)  
3/24 **ELVIS COOPER** (ALICE COOPER MASH-UP) AND **TROMPE LE MONDE** (PIXIES TRIBUTE) 7PM  
3/25 **COMMUNIST DAUGHTER** W/ LAKEWOOD CEMETERY, HOLIDAE  
3/26 **TUNES 'N 'TOONS BRUNCH** W/ JOHN EWING SPINNING TUNES 10AM - 3PM, NO COVER  
3/26 **FURY THINGS** W/ DEAD SOFT, STRANGE RELATIONS, THE CULT OF LIP, THE CRASH BANDITS 8PM  
3/27 **OUTLAW BRUNCH** W/ THE FEDERALES (NO COVER/ALL AGES) 10AM - 3PM  
3/27 **SNIPER 66** W/ VIRGIN WHORES, DIE GHOST, REBEL CITY ROLLERS 8PM  
3/30 **LAULU, SAM CASSIDY, THE HEIGHBURNERS** 7:30PM  
3/31 **GRAYSHOT ALBUM RELEASE SHOW** W/ BREANNE DÜREN 7:30PM  
4/01 **AMERICAN SCARECROWS** W/ BEN LUBECK (OF FAREWELL MILWAUKEE), JIM PULLMAN BAND 8PM  
4/02 **GREEN RIVER ORDINANCE** W/ LUKE WADE 8PM  
4/05 **MILK & BONE** 7:30PM  
4/06 **HAR MAR SUPERSTAR** W/ INVISIBLE BOY, CHERRY COLA 7PM

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**ON SALE THURSDAY, MARCH 17 AT 10AM**

a jam production. **FIRST AVENUE** **93X**





PETRONELLA J. YTSMA

## CONTINUED FROM THURSDAY ►

celebrating St. Patrick's Day in an artsy way. Instead of cramming yourself into a bar, head over to the museum for green beer and other festive libations. Activities include Celtic-knot bracelet and Lego leprechaun trap-making. There will be 30-minute mini tours through the galleries throughout the evening, or sign up to become a Mia member (which is also free) to score admission to the "State of the Art: Discovering American Art Now" exhibition. Be sure to stop by the photobooth to commemorate your evening. Live music will be provided by Aby Wolf. Free. 6 to 9 p.m. 2400 Third Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-870-3131. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

## COMEDY

## PAUL HOOPER

JOKE JOINT COMEDY CLUB

Comedian Paul Hooper is a noted road warrior, but recently he found himself in a relationship. His friends in the New York comedy scene were surprised by this development. "I was single for five years, which is how long I've been in New York," explains the North Carolina native. "This was a new thing for my friends here. They thought I was some kind of lone wolf." Indeed, Hooper is famous for his love of hotel rooms and enjoying his alone time. Much of his act now centers on how his friends are reacting to his relationship status. And he's had to

drop one bit: "I used to make fun of guys who raced home after a road gig to their wives or girlfriends," he says. "I would just ridicule them. But after getting into this relationship, I've grabbed an early flight or drove six hours back." That's when it struck him. "I should probably drop that bit because now I'm that guy." Carmen Morales features. \$15. 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday; 10:30 p.m. Friday; 7:30 and 9:45 p.m. Saturday. 801 Sibley Memorial Hwy., Lilydale; 651-330-9078. Through Saturday —P.F. WILSON

FRIDAY 3/18

## THEATER

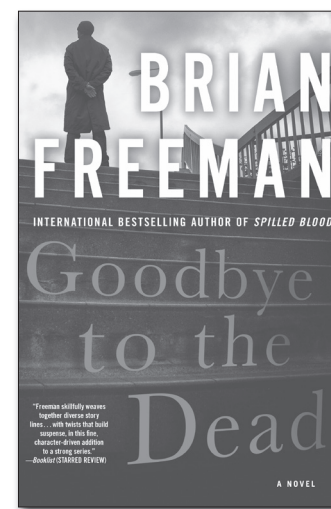
## LOVE PERSON

PARK SQUARE THEATRE

Staged by Park Square Theatre, Aditi Brennan Kapil's *Love Person* focuses on a group of four: a deaf woman named Free, her longtime partner Maggie, Free's passionate single sister Vic, and the subject of Vic's latest infatuation, Ram, a visiting Sanskrit scholar from India. Though Vic had planned to attract Ram with an alluring email, Free decides to rewrite the message before hitting send, inadvertently inciting a relationship with her sister's would-be paramour. Though the scenario could lend itself to satiric slapstick, *Love Person* instead invests sincerity in depicting the difficulties of fostering an emotional connection. This theme is reinforced by the play's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 ►

# Meet Brian Freeman



## *Goodbye to the Dead* Discussion / Book Signing

**Tuesday, March 22nd, 7PM**  
**The Galleria**  
**3225 West 69th Street**  
**Edina (952) 920-0633**

A detective's investigation into a killing in Duluth hits close to home when the murder weapon is linked to a cold case involving the best friend of his late wife.

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## BILLY STRINGS

Steel String Virtuosity

March 18 | 8 pm

"Kid can pick! DAMN can he pick!"  
- The Bluegrass Situation

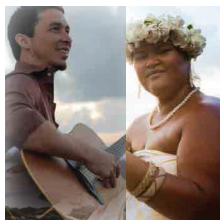


## NEW SHOES

Members of

Prairie Home Companion  
house band cut loose!

March 21 - 7 pm



## MAKANA AND PAULA FUGA

Evocative Slack-key Guitar

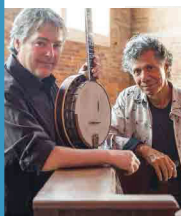
March 22 - 7 pm

"A dynamic force within the style." - NY Times

## COMING UP NEXT

Tickets: 612.332.5299

- 3/19 Class Action Reunion  
Funk Soul Jazz Fusion
- 3/20 Janiva Magness  
Award Winning Blues Singer
- 3/24-26 Shawn Colvin  
Intimate Solo Sessions
- 3/27 Robby Kreiger: The Music of the Doors  
Legendary Rock Guitarist
- 3/29 Jeff Austin Band  
Dazzling Bluegrass Mandolin
- 4/2 Keri Noble  
Romantic Piano Pop
- 4/3-4 SFJazz Collective: The Music of Michael Jackson  
Cavalcade of Jazz Talent
- 4/7 Mary Gauthier  
Americana Troubadour



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April 18 | 7:30 pm

818 S 2nd St, Minneapolis

Tickets: 612-377-2224

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## Late Night

11:30 Music - Happy Hour until Midnight

Fri 3/18 Ginstrings      Fri 4/1 Jeanne Taylor  
Sat 3/19 Bre Lewis Band      Sat 4/2 Lucid Vanguard  
Fri 3/25 Niles      Sat 4/16 Ginstrings



## A-LIST



Eclectic Edge  
weathers the  
storm into spring

### CONTINUED FROM FRIDAY ►

uniquely multilingual approach, as the characters communicate through English, American Sign Language, and Sanskrit poetry. (The show is also performed in ASL.) With Kapil taking on the directorial duties, the production features a formidable foursome of Canae Weiss, Erin Anderson Gardner, Elizabeth Efteland, and Imran Sheikh. Arriving just in time for spring romance, *Love Person* offers a charming reminder that even the most ambrosial of languages can fall short of expressing the heart's desires. The show is in previews March 18-24. \$40-\$60; pay-as-able March 30. 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays, plus Tuesday, March 22-23 and Wednesday, March 30; 2 p.m. Sundays. 20 W. Seventh Pl., St. Paul; 651-291-7005. **Through April 10 —BRAD RICHASON**

### ART/GALLERY

## SYNTHESIS: PAINTINGS BY AZA ERDRICH

ALL MY RELATIONS ARTS

Aza Erdrich, daughter of the award-winning novelist Louise Erdrich, gets her debut solo exhibition with "Synthesis," a show that is guest-curated by Dyani White Hawk. Drawing on her experiences as a young woman of both Native and non-Native ancestry, Erdrich explores Anishinabe traditions in works that weave personal narrative with family connections. Erdrich incorporates Native practices in her pieces, using them to find innovations

in her contemporary practice. A descendent of the Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibwe, Erdrich has previously been included in group exhibitions at Two Rivers Gallery and Banfill-Locke Center in Minnesota, as well as at shows in Arizona and North Dakota. She has created artwork and design for a number of publications, including the cover illustration for the paperback version of her mother's novel *The Round House*, and drawings for *Original Local*, a book about indigenous food penned by her aunt, Heid Erdrich. The opening reception this Friday, March 18, kicks off at 7 p.m., and will include refreshments from Powwow Grounds and music by DJ Miguel Vargas. The first 100 guests will receive a free poster for the exhibit signed by the artist. 1414 E. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-235-4970. **Through May 31 —SHEILA REGAN**

### DANCE

## SNOW BOUND!

THE LAB THEATER

Eclectic Edge Ensemble continues its dedication to providing fresh perspectives on jazz dance with a new take on a previous collaboration. The dancers have teamed up with Mad Munchkin Productions to recreate the seasonally appropriate work *Snow Bound! A Journey from Autumn to Spring*. Replete with vivacious choreography, original music, and puppets ranging from massive to tiny, the piece is told from a woman's point of view, and ushers in spring with imagery and imagination. Originally created in 2011, the work now includes three new sections that



move through darkness to dazzle. It's an all-ages performance with timeless appeal. \$17/\$20 at the door. 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. 700 First St. N., Minneapolis; 612-333-3377. **Through Sunday** —**CAMILLE LEFEVRE**

## COMEDY

### JIMMY PARDO

ACME COMEDY CO.

While he's still not quite a household name, Jimmy Pardo has a sizable and loyal following. He's sort of like the Black Keys of standup comedy. "There's a circle that knows me, and knows me very well, and they either love me or have no interest in me," he says. "And then there are the people that don't know I exist yet." The latter group is getting smaller, thanks to his work on Conan O'Brien's show and his own popular podcast, *Never Not Funny*. Fans of the podcast have been known to drive for hours to see Pardo, as the number of clubs he does per year has dropped due to his busy schedule in Los Angeles. He also feels the show complements his somewhat free-form performance style. "I should probably be more diligent about making the stories that work on the podcast translate over to standup," he notes. "That's something I'm working on this year." \$18. 8 and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393. **Through Saturday** —**P.F. WILSON**

SATURDAY 3/19

## THEATER

### WATERMELON HILL

HISTORY THEATRE

First staged in 2001, *Watermelon Hill* recounts the experiences of three middle-aged women who, decades earlier, had found themselves in the unenviable position of being young, unwed, and pregnant. Adapted by Lily Barber Coyle from *Shadow Mothers*, a nonfiction study of once common adoption practices by Linda Back McKay, *Watermelon Hill* recalls 1965 as an era during which sexual education was virtually nonexistent, birth control was widely misunderstood, and the common illegality of abortion ruled it out as an option for many women who found themselves "in trouble." Charitable organizations, such as the Catholic Infant Home on Cathedral Hill, were another choice. They provided each woman with shelter and a pseudonym, and allowed them to stay for the duration of their pregnancies. Soon after birth, however, the newborn was taken away for adoption while the birth mother was instructed to resume



WILLIAM CAMERON

## THEATER

### VOCAL ESSENCE: FOUR SAINTS IN THREE ACTS

THE COWLES CENTER FOR DANCE & THE PERFORMING ARTS

Virgil Thomson's opera with a libretto by that sly wordsmith Gertrude Stein was written in Paris in the 1920s, and first performed in Connecticut in 1934. The plot follows the lives of four 16th-century Spanish saints, recalled by them at a heavenly picnic. Thomson's music was inspired by jazz, gospel, and folk. Stein's lyrics reflect her experiments with the sounds and sense of words, which are often at eccentric odds with one another. For this production, VocalEssence and conductor Philip Brunelle team up with director/choreographer Carl Flink and his Black Label Movement Company. Flink has shown his considerable theatrical chops in the U of M and Theater Latté Da's brilliant production of *Spring Awakening* and the Guthrie's *The Crucible*. He seems just the man to make visceral sense of this camp classic. \$20-\$30. 8 p.m. Saturday; 4 p.m. Sunday. 528 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-206-3636. **Through Sunday** —**LINDA SHAPIRO**

her life as though the experience could be erased from memory. Directed by Anya Kremenetsky, a trio of talented performers (Emily Gunyou Halaas, Aeyshah Kinnunen, and Adelin Phelps) voice the heartbreaking secret shared by a generation of women. \$20-\$38. 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays; 2 p.m. Sundays. 30 E. 10th St., St. Paul; 651-292-4323. **Through April 10** —**BRAD RICHASON**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31 ►

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**MARCH 17**



**REMEMBERING BRIAN GALLAGHER**  
w/ GREAZY MEAL & FRIENDS  
**MARCH 19**



**SIMO**  
Ft. THE GLORIOUS SONS & JACUZZI PUMA  
**MARCH 23**



**MINNESOTA STAND UP ARTIST SHOWCASE**  
Feat. ASHLEY DUBOSE  
**MARCH 24**



**CIRCLE OF HEAT**  
RELEASE SHOW  
w/ ANALOG SON & NEW ELEMENTS  
**MARCH 25**



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**MAY 15**



**BARENAKED LADIES**  
WITH SPECIAL GUESTS ORCHESTRAL MANEUVERS IN THE DARK, & HOWARD JONES  
**JUNE 3**



**FLOGGING MOLLY**  
**AUGUST 10**

## UPCOMING

3/18	CRAM Spring Showcase	Feat. CHESTER WATSON w/ CHANCE YORK, RADIO AHLEE, PRIME.CUT, JOHN SHRIMPNOSE, WEALTHY RELATIVE & DJ BOOGIEWONDERLAND
3/20	Lydia Can't Breathe	
3/26	That 1 Guy	
3/31	My Parent's Basement – Spring Break Dance Party 2016	w/ MIKE THE MARTYR & DJLOW SPINNIN
4/1	TAUK	w/ THE HEARD
4/2	30th Anniversary of "Master of Puppets"	Feat. ONE – TRIBUTE TO METALLICA
4/3	TRAPT	
4/4	ABK - Anybody Killa	w/ BONEZ, LIQUID ASSISSIN & MORE
4/5	The Contortionist	w/ MONUMENTS, ENTHEOS, SLEEPMAKESWAVES & BY THE THOUSANDS
4/6	Hot Buttered Rum	w/ THE LAST REVEL
4/8	Father	w/ BOBBY RAPS, MARTIN SKY, TIIIIIIIP & BVKWOODS
4/9	Zach Deputy	
4/10	Jay Electronica	w/ SARAH WHITE & GREG GREASE

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SUNDAY 3/20

## ARTS/FESTIVAL

## MINNEAPOLIS CRAFT MARKET: ARCTIC MARKET

LAKES &amp; LEGENDS BREWING COMPANY

Putting the emphasis on both craft and beer, Minneapolis Craft Market is making another appearance at Lakes & Legends Brewing Company this weekend. The festive flea market features all types of locally made wares, including pottery, jewelry, handbags, and woodwork. The event debuted outdoors last fall, and has gone into semi-hibernation over this winter, though a few indoor pop-ups are planned, including this one. On Sunday, over 20 makers will be selling their creations, making this event a solid reason to shop, connect with artists, and drink beer. Vendors include Bare Naked Soap Company, Flourish Arts and Gifts, HipNoses, and Of Thread and Leather. Free. Noon to 6 p.m. 1368 Lasalle Ave., Minneapolis; 612-999-6020. **Also April 24 —LOREN GREEN**

## SPRING

## MACY'S FLOWER SHOW: AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

MACY'S DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS

Spring may be a fleeting season in Minnesota, but Macy's Annual Flower Show allows guests to revel in it. Over the next couple of weeks, the eighth-floor auditorium will come alive with grasses, tropical flowers, cacti, and other green and not-so-green flora. This being an election year, the event has gone with a patriotic theme. Hopefully guests will find the exhibition a stress-free experience, however, as they wander through displays intended to showcase and represent the wide variety of greenery living in our backyards, from the sandy beaches of California to the dry heat of Arizona through the flat plains of the Midwest to the rocky East Coast. Be sure to check online at [www.macys.com/flowershow](http://www.macys.com/flowershow) for a complete schedule, as some days will also feature cooking demonstrations, workshops, and family activities. Or, if you work up an appetite (and a desire for cocktails), stop by Macy's Oak Grill for floral-inspired concoctions

and confections. Free. The event is open during regular store hours. 700 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis; 612-375-2200.

**Through April 3 —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

TUESDAY 3/22

## DANCE

## ANIMAL DANCE

CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY

In her groundbreaking 1988 piece *Animals*, Ann Carlson performed with goats, a dog, a kitten, and even a goldfish in a bowl. Jack Anderson, writing in the New York Times, called the work a "holy dance" due to its poignant universality. Now the New York-based theater and dance artist has created a new work based on *Animals* for the Children's Theatre Company. Called *Animal Dance*, the new performance was designed for preschool children, but is sure to touch the hearts and minds of viewers regardless of age. Baby goats, bunnies, and a tortoise join Carlson onstage in a performance that challenges notions of where human and animal behavior begin and end. Unpredictable and new each time, the



DAN NORMAN

work has Carlson responding to the cues she receives from her furry friends. \$16-\$21. 10:30 a.m. Tuesdays through Fridays; 11 a.m., 2, and 4 p.m. Saturdays; noon, 2, and 4 p.m. Sundays. 2400 Third Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-874-0400.

**Through May 1 —CAMILLE LEFEVRE**CATFISH  
—AND THE—  
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UPCOMING

3/26

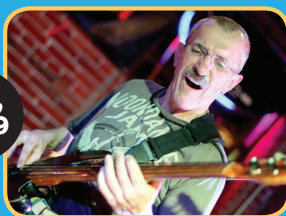
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GARY GOLDSTEIN, LOS ANGELES TIMES

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## SEVENTH MINNESOTA CUBAN FILM FESTIVAL

**Mar 17, They are We**

Emma Christopher | U.S. | 2015  
Documentary | 79 min

An anthropologist's film reunites families from Sierra Leone and the Cuban community of Gangá-Longobá who were torn apart by the trans-Atlantic slave trade.



**Mar 24, Vestido de Novia**

Marilyn Solaya | Cuba/Spain | 2014  
Fiction | 100 min

The second of the festival's gender-themed films takes place during the less-enlightened 1990s. The couple is newly married and very much in love, but one has a painful secret.



**Mar 31, Boccaccerías Habaneras**

Arturo Sotto | Cuba | 2014 | Comedy | 100 min

Three narratives combined by an author in search of anecdotes for his book. The tellers are hoping to win money or perhaps appear in a movie. Winner of Best Director and Best Screenplay at the 2015 New York Havana Film Festival.



Thursdays, 7:00 pm  
Feb 25 – March 31, 2015  
St. Anthony Main Theatre  
Minneapolis

**\$6.00 admission for all**

Films are in Spanish with English subtitles and several are accompanied by a short feature. Discussions will take place following the films.

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THU // MARCH 17

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Kip's Irish Pub | 6:30pm-10:30pm  
Drink green beer, watch live Irish dancing,  
and enjoy live music by The Tim Malloys.  
Lucky you, we'll be giving out prizes!

SUN // MARCH 20

**MINNEAPOLIS  
CRAFT MARKET**

Lakes and Legends  
Brewing Company | 12pm-6pm  
A winter pop-up Minneapolis craft market  
inside Lakes and Legends Brewing Company.  
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# THINK DIFFERENT – NO, REALLY

*Creative Control's* familiar story has already been told more compellingly



*Creative Control's* slick aesthetic can't make up for its faux complexity.

COURTESY OF MAGNOLIA PICTURES

BY MICHAEL NORDINE

Not to blow your mind or anything, but it turns out that the technology we use to connect to one another can actually have the opposite effect. Crazy, right? *Creative Control* is the latest low-key sci-fi drama to treat this common knowledge as a grand revelation from on high. It's the kind of movie that can feel hard to describe — not because its ideas are complex but because its presentation thereof underscores how thin they really are.

Co-writer/director/star Benjamin Dickinson plays David, an ad man overseeing the marketing push for a new product called Augmenta. Google Glass-like in design, it projects a constantly updating layer of information and graphics atop the physical world in front of the user. After procuring a

pair for himself, David does what any douchey guy would do: uses Augmenta to create a virtual version of his friend's beautiful girlfriend.

Like the similarly middling *Ex Machina*, *Creative Control* is a speculative account of how we mediate ongoing tensions — public and private, physical and digital. It also dares to ask how long it'll take for tech gurus to start having sex with their creations.

This is probably fairly realistic and plausible as these things go, but that doesn't make it especially edifying to watch — especially since both *Her* and an episode of *Black Mirror* recently covered similar ground more compellingly. (Side note: If you're in the mood for this kind of thing and have yet to watch *Black Mirror*, go watch every episode on Netflix. Like, now.)

Dickinson's film lacks the resonance of

either of those predecessors. Its above-it-all sense of humor precludes any genuine emotional stakes. That David isn't especially likable isn't a problem unto itself, but the fact that he's so uninteresting is. It's hard to care what happens in *Creative Control* for the simple reason that there's little cause to care about what happens to him. The movies are full of robots and other forms of artificial intelligence with far more dimension than this bro.

He and several of his cohorts are the techy version of aimless Bret Easton Ellis characters, minus the poignancy. One will use Mercury being in retrograde as an excuse for her unusual behavior. Another postulates that humans are more comfortable with loops than spirals because we want to know where we'll end up.

Movies about how technology has changed our daily lives face an uphill battle; sci-fi narratives that actually

## CREATIVE CONTROL

directed by Benjamin Dickinson  
opens Friday, Lagoon Cinema

explore new ideas are rare, and those that explore old ideas in new ways equally so. *Creative Control* doesn't really do either, though its slick aesthetic adds a sheen of sophistication to its familiar headiness. This is the present as near-future, an Apple commercial come to life. (It's even in black and white for some reason.)

Treating thinkpiece wisdom as a revelation isn't *Creative Control's* only glitch. It also overuses onscreen visualizations of text messages and overestimates its characters' cleverness (to say nothing of its own). Worst of all, this faux-complexity is presented as a feature rather than a bug — a miscalculation in a film full of them. **CF**





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# JUST BELOW THE SURFACE

*Basement Creatures* is weird, whimsical, and plot-free



BRUCE SILCOX

BY JAY GABLER

In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre (HOBT) is known for creating puppets as tall as its name is long: those distinctive, towering figures that populate stage productions and act as unofficial grand marshals of Powderhorn's annual MayDay Parade. With *Basement Creatures*, HOBT makes a foray into small-scale, intimate puppetry.

The show doesn't actually take place in a basement; it unfolds behind the curtain on HOBT's stage, where the audience takes in the show from a set of bleachers after gathering in what's usually the seating area. Into this darkened realm, the Subterranean Explorer (Angie Courchaine) descends on chains. She's reached the eponymous basement, and is there for an odyssey at the intersection of *Alice in Wonderland*, Monty Python, and *Cabaret*.

Davey T. Steinman, who wrote and directed the show with music by a shadowy Band of Creatures, calls the production "an underground rock opera." It's a motley affair in which a succession of creepy-crawlies, played by puppetry-aided performers, sing to the Explorer about topics ranging from the highly pertinent (Charlotte Calvert, as a bedbug, sings of her bloodlust) to the extremely remote (Peter Lincoln Rusk, as an anthropomorphic blackboard, reveals his ignorance of what exactly the sun is and how it works).

The songs range from vaudeville pastiche to EDM. The Explorer's guide through the subterranean world is Steinman himself as

## BASEMENT CREATURES

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Through March 26; 612-721-2535

the Basement Dweller, an insecure emcee who forgives the Explorer for quickly killing some of his kin and proceeds to befriend her.

Near the show's conclusion, the Basement Dweller mocks the above-ground insistence on linear narrative, which anticipates the most obvious criticism of this show: There's virtually no plot, and even the thematic threads (sustainability, the hubris of humankind, etc.) are loose at best. Essentially, *Basement Creatures* is just an excuse for a bizarre bevy of bugs to take their turns in the spotlight.

Some of the musical numbers build into nearly incoherent spectacle. Rusk, for example, reappears as an Organ Surgeon who's made out of discarded papers; before you can figure out what exactly he's singing about, he seemingly disembowels himself. At another point several performers in black suits and giant insect heads gather for a weird, choreographed dance while the Basement Dweller rants about politics.

Courchaine — whose silvery duct-hose costume looks to have required trips to REI, American Apparel, and Menards — proves an expressive and subtle physical actor, silently holding our empathy and our interest as droll chaos erupts around her. But when the Explorer moves to make her vertical escape from this shambling show, you're definitely rooting for her. **CP**

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# SXSW OR BUST

South by Southwest has morphed into a corporatized behemoth — so what motivates Minnesota bands to still attend?

Holidae will make their SXSW debut Friday.



SHELLY DIXON

BY GRACE BIRNSTENGEL

The annual South by Southwest conference/festival is one of the biggest musical events of the year — for artists, both major and upstart, who scramble to Austin, Texas; for writers who refresh Twitter obsessively waiting for news items; and for bookers, publicists, and A&R reps who try to make sense of six days of chaos.

Increasingly, though, the March 15-20 music portion of SXSW — which follows the affiliated tech and film conferences — has become synonymous with another “M” word: money. In recent years, SXSW has taken shots for ditching DIY culture and saluting relentless capitalism instead. Last year, the Wall Street Journal reported on SXSW from a lens they called “brand overload,” describing the festival as “marketers marketing their marketing efforts

to other marketers.” Sponsors of SXSW 2016 include, but aren’t limited to, Samsung, United Airlines, McDonald’s, and Capital One.

If the fest has turned its back on its indie roots, that’s certainly not stopping indie bands from showing up. Last year, more 2,200 acts hit more than 100 stages during SXSW, and that’s only counting the official channel. So, if South by Southwest has become a corporatized clusterfuck, what motivates Minnesota musicians to keep making the annual pilgrimage to Texas?

Minnesota artists are very familiar with the 17-hour drive down I-35. Local alt-country pioneers the Jayhawks played the second installment of SXSW in 1988; Soul Asylum — who are attending again in 2016 — made their SXSW debut in 1995; Semisonic played in 1998; and Prince even made his presence felt three years ago.

This year, more than a dozen locals will sweat on SXSW stages.

Ashley Gold and Garrett Neal are local synth-pop duo Holidae, who will be making their SXSW debut Friday at the Star Tribune and First Avenue’s Midwest Showcase, featuring Har Mar Superstar, Bad Bad Hats, Night Moves, and more. Holidae — who scored their spot in the showcase by winning the Strib’s Are You Local? contest in February — have barely solidified their footing in their home state, and now they’re being thrust into the overwhelming heart of live music.

“I’m still surprised that we won Are You Local?,” Gold admits. “I just want to be present and show how hard we work on our music. I’m nervous to put it out there.”

Artists who didn’t win their way to Austin can apply to play SXSW via Sonicbids, an event application program that gives the festival all your details — tracks, bio,

press, photos/videos — in one package for a \$33-\$45 fee.

Peter Michael Miller of local orchestral rock group We Are the Willows put his band’s best application forward the past two years, before eventually landing a spot on this year’s bill. In 2015, We Are the Willows played four unofficial showcases via connections with Austin-based friends and venues. Is there a real difference between playing a SXSW-tagged show vs. one mooching off the festival spillover? Miller isn’t convinced, but he’s curious to see the difference.

“A show being great doesn’t hinge on being official or unofficial. It’s unaffected,” he says. “It’s helpful for our publicist to say we played [SXSW]. That holds some currency for some people.”

Miller says partaking in SXSW is an intense commitment — both financially and time-wise. Two members of We Are



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## MUSIC

the Willows, bassist Travis Collins and guitar/banjo-player Jeremiah Satterthwaite, work for public schools in the Twin Cities, making a spontaneous trip to Texas not-so-spontaneous.

"It's a big expense, but for the most part we broke even [last year]," Miller says. "This year we'll get close to that."

Other local bands, like colorful pop-rockers Carroll, will be on the road anyway, making SXSW just another stop on the tour. Like We Are the Willows, Carroll also applied to play and were selected, but didn't stop there.

"You don't want to go down to play just one [official] show," drummer Charlie Rudoy says. "The past couple weeks we've been picking up more unofficial shows that make it more worth it."

More established artists skip the vetting process altogether and let their label handle SXSW bureaucracy. Local psychedelic rockers Night Moves had their record label, Domino, place them in various showcases, frontman John Pelant says. On top of that, locally loved song-and-dance man Har Mar Superstar asked them to play his "Best Party Ever" showcase.

But SXSW life isn't without its drawbacks. Broken dreams, dysfunctional planning, and suffocating corporatization are all part of the SXSW machine.

"Getting discovered, rising in the ranks, or whatever — that might be a thing still, but I just don't really think that's what it is anymore," Miller says, adding that networking with other bands is the most realistic opportunity. "[SXSW] is where A&R people would go to find new acts, but now the internet does that."

Dreams of barbecue and tacos, on the other hand, are absolutely achievable, provided you can handle the lines.

"There's a lot of pseudo-mythologizing about what can happen at [SXSW]. It's over-the-top and kind of unrealistic," guitarist Max Kulicke of Carroll says. "We're just hoping to eat good food."

It's not always as simple as shoving back tacos, though. The swarm of thousands of bands means tons of potential for errors and miscommunications. "There's always a last-minute scramble for something that drives me crazy," Miller says.

Rudoy echoes this frustration with festival logistics.

"You show up sometimes and you have five minutes to load on for a 15-minute set," he says. "The first time we played we had to walk seven blocks to the show, and one of our members had a hernia and couldn't lift anything. We used a skateboard to move stuff."

Local artists aren't stoked about the flashy logos and useless branded water bottles and key chains made in China, but the overwhelming presence of commerce doesn't claw at their cores enough to keep them from attending. At least the five-story-tall Doritos stage — which was fashioned after an actual vending machine and hosted Snoop Dogg and Lady Gaga in years past — was retired for 2016. RIP.

"We've grown up in a world where this happens. Everything becomes about capitalism and branding," Gold says. "The climate is so corporatized in our everyday life. It makes sense that they would come in and take this market as well."

Pelant doesn't remember a SXSW without big-name brands like Verizon, Bud Lite, and Mazda, so it doesn't bum him out. "I don't know what the alternative would be," he says.

And for Kulicke, the whole corporate ordeal is irrelevant to what Carroll is going down to Texas to do: play music, obviously. **CP**

## CRITICS' PICKS

### DILLINGER FOUR

TURF CLUB, THURSDAY 3.17

Cries for "Doublewhiskeycokenoise" will ring louder than usual at this Dillinger Four rager. The booze-swillin' local punk greats are soundtracking the drunkest of all holidays — sorry, Flag Day — with this St. Patrick's Day guitar party in St. Paul. Expect to hear "Sally MacLennane," the group's hyper-speed cover of the 1985 single from Celtic rock 'n' roll legends the Pogues. D4 haven't put out a full-length album since 2008's *Civil War*, but frontman Paddy Costello promises "at least one new release" in 2016. Vice's music blog Noisy called the veteran Twin Cities quartet "quite possibly the most beloved, most influential punk band of their generation" in a wide-ranging profile from

last year. Opening the St. Paddy's bash are Nato Coles & the Blue Diamond Band, Bug Fix, Cherry Cola, and multiple rounds. 21+. \$13. 7:30 p.m. 1601 University Ave. W. St. Paul; 651-647-0486. —JAY BOLLER

### THE PINES

FIRST AVENUE, FRIDAY 3.18

The earthly and spiritual merge on the starlit Great Plains on the Pines' gorgeous new album, *Above the Prairie*. Acoustic and slide guitar, fiddle, banjo, shuffling rhythms, and grainy vocals seem to ooze out of rich black soil, while synth-generated celestial atmospherics flow like rose-tinted mist. Poetic, vividly impressionistic lyrics also probe that nexus between organic and ethereal, as the Minneapolis trio yearns for something essential and elusive in its rural roots. Except songwriters David Huckfelt and Benson

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## MUSIC CRITICS' PICKS

Ramsey don't so much find a path back to Eden as lament the impossibility of doing so. There's a sense throughout the album of something slipping away, whether it's lost love or home, passing time, or connections to the Earth: "We're out of the wild and into the tame," they sing on "Where Something Wild Still Grows." It's a disconnect echoed on the elegiac last track, "Time Dreams," a poem by the late Native American musician/activist John Trudell set to music. Phil Cook and Stolyette open. 18+. \$15.8 p.m. 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —RICK MASON

## A PIANO IN EVERY HOME

ICEHOUSE, SATURDAY 3.19  
It's only March, but A Piano in Every Home are early favorites for 2016 year-end lists in the Twin Cities. The combination of Jake Pavak, Travis Erickson, Jake Wallenius, and Mark Newcome Kartarik has been impressing with rich, warm songwriting since the band's 2013 debut, *Meridian*. The upcoming two-part *North American Review* — part I being celebrated tonight at Icehouse, part II out in May — shows the St. Paul folksters growing not only in age but in ambition. "Waiting on a Big Jet Plane" is not the album's first single, but its cozy attic setting reveals more about *North American Review* than any of the band's previous releases. In the music video, with their breath freezing in the air, the four share a common mic to unspool their Americana blues. Chris Koza opens. 21+. \$8-\$10. 11 p.m. 2528 Nicollet Ave. Minneapolis; 612-276-6523. —JERARD FAGERBERG

## GREG DULLI

CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER,  
SATURDAY 3.19

Greg Dulli's current tour has him performing 32 intimate solo shows (billed as "An Evening With ...," no less) in 11 countries. The Cedar Cultural Center is a definite underplay for the Afghan Whigs frontman, a fact made clear when the gig instantly sold out upon its announcement last year. The moody and horny indie-rock icon drummed up hype for the solo excursion last October by releasing a cover of Sharon Van Etten's "A Crime," with help from guest vocalist Ani DiFranco. The solo tour promises to be career-spanning, which means cuts from the Whigs, the Twilight Singers, and his less celebrated solo albums. The reunited Whigs played First Avenue in 2014, but their devoted fanbase will relish the opportunity to see Dulli — whose gloominess is always wonderfully contrasted with R&B-indebted soulfulness — in these intimate digs. Writer Derrick Brown will open the American leg of the tour, so who the hell knows what that entails. *All ages. Sold out. 7 p.m. 416 Cedar Ave. S. Minneapolis; 612-338-2674.* —JAY BOLLER

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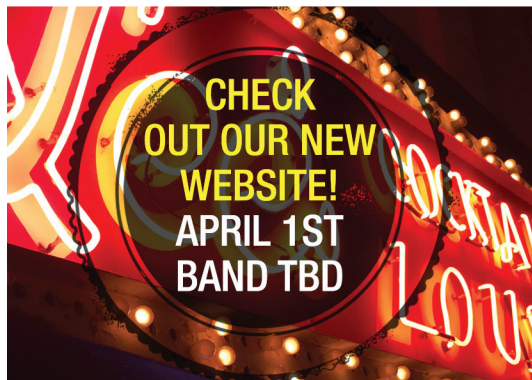
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thu : march 17  
10pm : thursdays in march with...  
gabe barnett & them rounders  
w/ the bolt weevils  
fri : march 18  
7pm : laura and sean's movie  
and music trivia  
10pm : ghostmouth,  
flasher (digital album release),  
nancey's raygun  
sat : march 19  
7pm : trivia mafia presents...  
331 drinkin' spelling bee  
10pm : brian casey the destroyer,  
midnight & mudd, palmspsalm  
sun : march 20  
3-5:30pm : corpse reviver  
(harry smith anthology project),  
8pm : trivia mafia  
mon : march 21  
8pm : the roe family singers  
10pm : doug otto and friends  
tue : march 22  
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## SAVAGE LOVE

# Kink in the Plan

And a magic jar to fight conservatives



**Dan Savage**

**I**'m a 27-year-old, feminist, conventionally attractive, straightish, GGG woman. Over time, I've found myself more of a kinkster. A few years ago, my desire for kinkier sex and my willingness to take a chance came together in a mutually beneficial, exciting D/s relationship. He was great for a while, but a big move took me away from the area. I assumed I would find another partner in the future as functionally great as him but maybe a better conversationalist. Fast-forward to today. I've dabbled with pain and submission play with a few boyfriends with no great success. (A partner who didn't respect my safe word, in fact, assaulted me.) The cycle always goes like this: I get horny and want kink, I go looking for it online, and I am then buried in a landslide of creepiness, typos, and aggression. There are just so many men out there who hate women. These men are more interested in condescending to me and bossing me around than they are in power exchange. It was recommended to me to join the local center for sex positivity in Seattle, but that costs money. I want to engage in kink to relieve stress, not to cut into my already tight budget. Are my only options perseverance or an extra grand lying around?

PERSEVERANCE OR WITHDRAWAL,  
ETERNAL REGRETS

**I definitely think** you should keep hacking your way through the creeps, typos, and aggro, POWER, but you may find the search for kinky play partners a little less frustrating if you devote a few hours a week to it — two hours a night, twice a week — instead of waiting until horniness and desperation drive you back online. If you search for kinky guys only when you just gotta have it, your inability to find it immediately is gonna be that much more frustrating.

And you might wanna find a kinky guy now, POWER, while you still can.

"According to a new federal court decision, Americans have no constitutional right to engage in consensual BDSM because 'sexual activity that involves binding and gagging or the use of physical force such as spanking or choking poses certain inherent risks to personal safety,'" Elizabeth Nolan Brown writes at Reason.com. "Thus officials

could constitutionally ban or regulate such activity in the interest of 'the protection of vulnerable persons,' the court held."

In 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Americans have a constitutional right to get their asses fucked, and one day soon we could be asking whether Americans have a constitutional right to get their asses spanked.

Finally, POWER, I'm a huge fan of Seattle's Center for Sex Positive Culture (thecspc.org). I'm such a big fan that I'm going to pick up the expense of your first year's membership at the Center for Sex Positive Culture. While there are additional charges for most events at the center, POWER, there are also tons of volunteer opportunities — and there's no better way to get to know the local kinksters than to pitch in and help out.

*I am the only liberal in my family. I love them, but there is no talking to them on the issues. I have come up with the idea of a Planned Parenthood jar. It is like a swear jar, but I will put money in it when I am too chickenshit or conflict-avoidant to have a hard conversation. Every time one of my family members puts up a stupid, ill-informed article on Facebook and I don't say anything, I will put money in the jar. Any time they tell me why Hillary Clinton is the devil, I will put money in the jar. It will assuage my guilt and make those moments easier because I can smugly think: "Keep talking, the only one you are helping is Planned Parenthood." Is this a cop-out or a narrowly tailored, appropriate penance?*

FEARFUL AND MILQUETOAST,  
I'M LEANING YELLOW

**Can't something be** a cop-out and a creative, appropriate penance? Whether it's one or the other or both, FAMILY, I'm strongly in favor of anything that benefits Planned Parenthood. For those who don't want to go through the motions of filling a jar with money, just go to [plannedparenthood.org](http://plannedparenthood.org) and click Donate.

**mail@savagelove.net**

Follow Dan on Twitter: @fakedansavage  
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305  
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315  
Condos/Duplexes/Townhomes for Rent

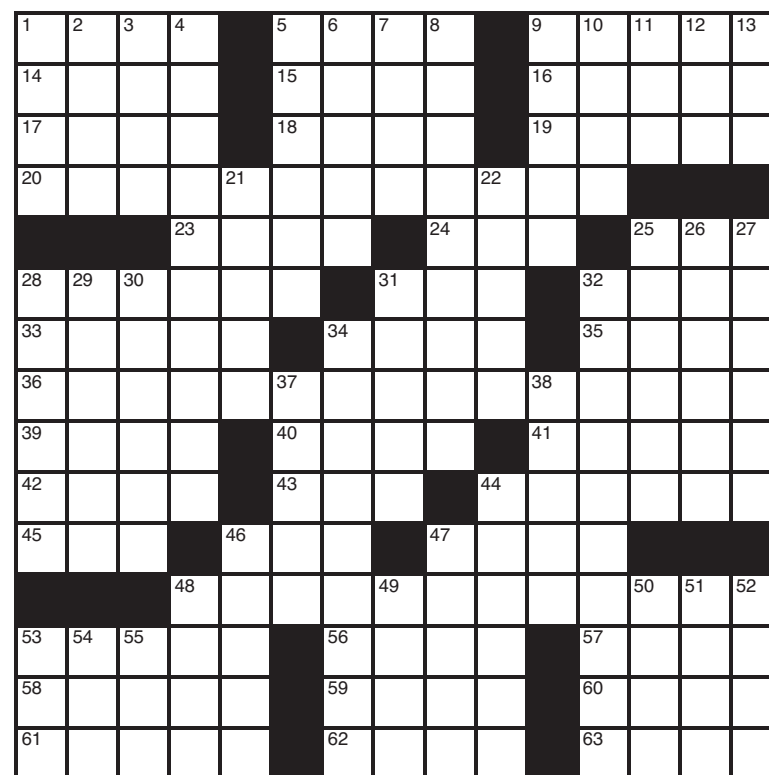
MPLS - Washburn Park/Tangletown Area  
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## CROSSWORD



### OH. MY. GOD!

BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

#### Across

- 1 Designer Vera
- 5 Temper tantrums
- 9 Gets wedding day cold feet
- 14 Instrument roughly 65 cm. long
- 15 "Typee" sequel
- 16 Fancy mushroom
- 17 "\_\_\_ we forget"
- 18 Mama's Special Garden Sauce maker
- 19 Mobil's merger partner
- 20 Smashing success
- 23 Zazzle purchases
- 24 Covers with Charmin
- 25 Bus transfer loc.
- 28 Preschooler, quaintly
- 31 "Why \_\_\_ we doing this?"
- 32 Cheeky flesh
- 33 Like blown out candles
- 34 Somewhat
- 35 Carbon compound
- 36 Fancy dress feature
- 39 Diaper spot
- 40 Someone you might be mistaken for
- 41 Stand-up comic Lange
- 42 Prefix with "while"
- 43 Drinking sound
- 44 NBA star nicknamed "The Black Mamba"
- 45 Former Ottoman title
- 46 Zazzle purchase
- 47 "I'm not providing, you drunks!"
- 48 Retooled vehicle that

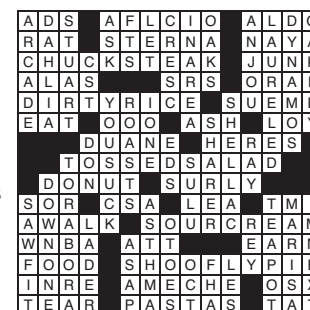
- crushes cars
- 53 Muslim's headcover
- 56 Proof word
- 57 Clock face shape
- 58 Go off the script
- 59 Prim and proper
- 60 "\_\_\_ you saying something?"
- 61 Like an emo kid
- 62 Tiny force of physics
- 63 Where the reins fall

#### Down

- 1 Moon howler
- 2 \_\_\_ Tesfaye (singer who goes by The Weeknd)
- 3 Prying
- 4 "Check your work!"
- 5 Space out, say
- 6 Computers with Fusion Drives
- 7 Deli order
- 8 Don Cornelius's TV show
- 9 Blows raspberries
- 10 '80s band whose name is a phonetic spelling of a phrase meaning "too much"
- 11 Fish for breakfast
- 12 Ring decision
- 13 Stealing, e.g.
- 21 Poetic location
- 22 Candidates sometimes write them
- 25 Brahms work
- 26 Something targeted in a strike?

- 27 Ready to go
- 28 Like the Tin Man when we meet him in "The Wizard of Oz"
- 29 Diluted
- 30 Glazed over, as eyes
- 31 Room for storage
- 32 "Governor Moonbeam"
- 34 Ready to snap
- 37 Affluenza teen Couch
- 38 Sun deck?
- 44 Without thinking
- 46 Crossword puzzle writing for some (not me)
- 47 Started
- 48 Help around the house
- 49 Shot from downtown
- 50 Iris holder
- 51 Freshwater fish
- 52 Artist Paul
- 53 Meat with eggs
- 54 "Yes! Me!"
- 55 Casper Smart's GF

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